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11 October 2000

DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION

OCT 16 10 51 13

Docket Management Facility
US Dept of Transportation
Room pl-401
400 Seventh Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20590-0001

DOCKET NUMBER: OST - 200 - 8013-21

**SUBJECT: Mountain Time to Central Time Rebutal for Mercer
County, North Dakota**

1. At the recent public hearing held in Beulah, ND concerning the proposed switch from Mountain to Central time, DOT attorney Joanne Petrie stated "the decision would be based on what best suits the convenience of commerce and what will help the schools and county grow."

2. Concerning what best suits helping the schools, Beulah School District Superintendent Wilfred Volesky said "Mountain Time Zone is an inconvenience to athletes." This was due to the travel time to other class "A" schools which Beulah must play, who are mostly east of the Missouri River in the Central Time Zone.

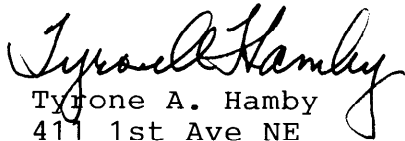
3. What his statement conveniently failed to expand on was that Beulah High School was forced to move up to class "A" athletic competition in 1999 due to a "bubble" of increased student population (300) which is the cut off point between class "A" and "B". However, this "bubble" of students is forcast to fall again below 300 in 2002, at which time the school athletic program will revert back to a class "B" schedule.

3. What is important about the class "B" athletic schedule for Beulah High School is that for the last 80 years the majority of schools that Beulah plays have been and will continue to remain on Mountain Time. Therefore, in the 2002-2003 school year, Beulah High School will revert back to class "B" and will play an athletic schedule primarily with schools on Mountain Time.

4. Therefore, the argument that Mr. Volesky uses about an inconvenience to athletes when travelling to Central Time Zone schools in the east is a disingenuous one which will no longer be valid in 2-3 years because of a steady decline in the student population.

5. So, if what is best for the schools is of primary consideration in the final determination, then switching to Central Time for a short term inconvenience is wholly unjustified and will only continue the inconvenience when the school reverts to class "B" again.

6. **Mercer County should remain on Mountain Time** until a "true" vote on the issue is held when the rural population of the county is able to participate. The issue was put on a June ballot for a very good reason - the proponents knew that was the best time to sidestep the most opponents to Central Time - the farmers and ranchers.


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